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LCPI WORK AT LAKE CHAMPLAIN, 1990

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INTRODUCTION

The search for the Loch Ness monster-like animals (Champ) of Lake Champlain by the Lake Champlain Phenomena Investigation (LCPI) in 1990 saw a scaled-down effort compared to the intensive work of the 1987 to 1989 expeditions. More conventional forms of searching, such as surface surveillance with cameras/binoculars and scuba, were emphasized.

This field report reviews the LCPI's fieldwork in 1990, and the reported Champ sightings for that year.

The LCPI's 1990 expedition efforts were directed at: (1) surface surveillance from shore and boat using cameras/binoculars; (2) scuba searches for a Champ carcass; (3) a Klein side-scan sonar search for a Champ carcass; (4) encouraging Champ eyewitnesses to report their sighting(s); and (5) to inform and educate people about this scientific mystery.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The LCPI conducted 22 days of fieldwork at Lake Champlain during 1990. A Klein 590 Dual Frequency (100/500 kHz) Side-Scan Sonar was provided to the LCPI courtesy of William Key (President) and Garry Kozak (Regional Sales Manager) of Klein Associates, Inc., of Salem, New Hampshire. Douglas Leininger provided the use of his runabout boat for the sonar surveying. All other equipment was provided by the LCPI or by individuals working with the LCPI.

The dates of the 22 days of fieldwork were: June 9, 23–24, 27–29; July 21; August 2, 11–16, 18–24; and September 28. Zarzynski participated in all 22 days of the 1990 LCPI fieldwork. Others who participated were: Bob Benway (June 9, 23–24; July 21); Pat Meaney (June 23, 27–29; August 11–13, 18–20, 22–24); Vincent J. Capone (June 23–24; August 18–19); Douglas Leininger (June 24); Russell Bellico (July 21; August 2, 19, 23); Captain Dan Couture (July 21; August 2, 23); Donald Mayland (August 15, 19); Duncan Mathewson (September 28); Joe Bereswill (September 28); and Jason Bacon (September 28).

Surface surveillance using cameras/binoculars was conducted on all 22 days. Sixteen dives were made at Lake Champlain on: June 6 (2 dives), June 23 (one dive), July 21 (two dives), August 2 (three dives), August 15 (one dive), August 19 (one dive), August 23 (two dives), September 2 (two dives), and September 28 (two dives).

On June 24th, one day of side-scan sonar searching using a Klein 590

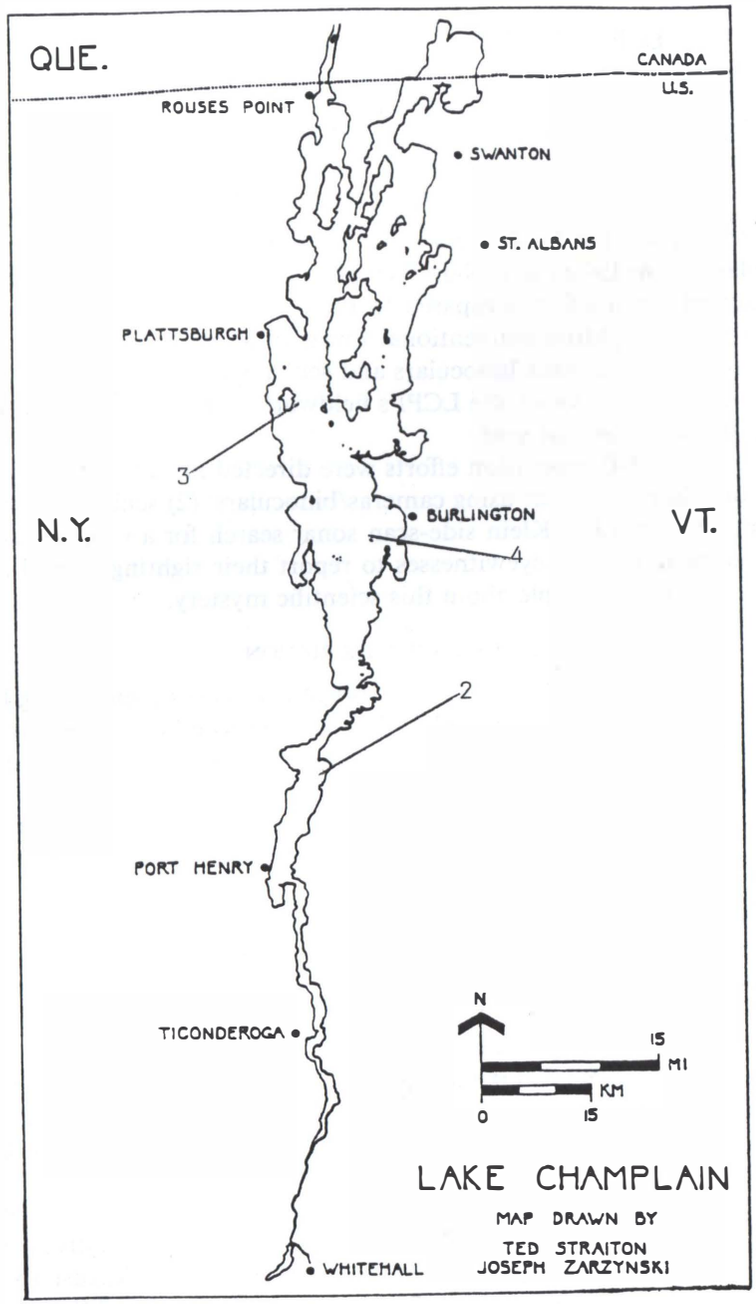

FIG. 1.—Map of Lake Champlain, with numbers indicating the locations of the eyewitness sightings reported to LCPI in 1990. The location of sighting #1 is unknown.

Dual Frequency Side-Scan Sonar was conducted in an attempt to locate a Champ carcass. Vincent J. Capone, President of Marine Search and Survey, of Princeton, New Jersey, acted as primary sonar operator.

RESULTS

No sighting of a Champ-like animal was made by personnel of the LCPI during the 1990 fieldwork.

Four 1990 Champ sightings were reported to the LCPI (Fig. 1). These sightings are listed below:

(1) Summer of 1990 (exact date not recorded): Mr. and Mrs. Charles Weinberg and twin daughters; observed "the phenomenon we call Champ" from their 36-foot (11 m)-long houseboat, *Crane*; no details provided on location, date, time, range, etc.

(2) August 16, 1990: Bob Kambic and family; near Button Bay, Vermont; observed from State Park at Button Bay; saw at a distance of 1 mile (1.6 km) to the south, "three low humps in the water"; each hump was "very long"; Kambic said that big fish or birds were diving around the animal; observed using 7 × 35 binoculars; time of day was 2:30 p.m.

(3) September 5, 1990: Ann and Lewis Wetzel; while sailing between Providence Island, Vermont, and Valcour Island, New York; estimated to be about 15–18 feet (4.5–5.5 m) in length; they observed humps about 2½ feet (76 cm) in length, and about 1 foot (30 cm) high; animal described as "a dark color," with skin "smooth with light texture"; no head seen; it was observed using binoculars at a range of about 150 yards (137 m); when the sailboat—which was under motor—neared the animal "it appeared to be frightened . . . and suddenly disappeared below the surface"; the sighting was estimated at between 3:10 and 3:15 p.m.; the Wetzels noted the surface water temperature at 68°F, and the depth of the water at the sighting spot was 195–205 feet (59–62 m).

(4) September 28, 1990: Stephen and Anita Allen and their 5-year-old son, Daniel; north side of Juniper Island, on the Vermont side of the lake; while boating, the family saw 2–3 parts of an animal's dark-colored body at a range of approximately 200 feet (60 m); they observed no head; parts of the body "not viewed as humps, but rather as different parts of a snakelike body"; calm lake surface; the Allens reported that a lot of fish were jumping at the water surface, and that possibly the animal was feeding; the sighting lasted about 30 seconds, and was made at 6:50 p.m.

FUTURE PLANS

The LCPI will continue its on-going research and fieldwork investigating the Champ phenomenon. The 1991 work will use the same methods as employed in 1990. It is hoped that these efforts will lead to accumulating further evidence to support the hypothesis that Lake Champlain is the habitat of a colony of 15–25-foot (4.5–7.5 m)-long animals still unknown to zoology.